(b) if so, the details of discussions held and the consensus arrived at the Conference; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c) A Conference of Governors was held on 2nd and 3rd June, 1997 at which the leaders of political parties were also invited. The main theme of the Conference was "The Role of the Constitutional Head, when, following an election, no party or combination of parties appears to have secured a majority."

In the Conference, the leaders of major political parties and other participants shared their views on the complexities inherent in the situation forming the theme of the Conference. It is felt that the Conference may well have succeeded in initiating and enlarging a wider process of appreciation and assessment of the subject. This will lead to a more informed out-look all around. In turn, this will make the working of the Constitution in certain problematic situations smoother and more transparent.

The Government proposes to continue the dialogue on this and other subjects which strengthen our democratic polity.

[Translation]

Patenting of Botanical and Animal Species

950. SHRI LALIT ORAON : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has rich abundance of 45 thousand botanical species and 95 thousand animal species but out of them 10 per cent species have been got patent by the foreign agencies in foreign countries; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) In India while quantification of the abundance in botanical, and Zoological species may not be possible, so far over 49,000 plant species and 81,000 animal species have been identified and described by the Botanical Survey of India and Zoological Survey of India respectively. The Government has not received any information/complaint about patenting of 10 per cent of species thus identified.

[English]

Fast Track Power Project

951. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) carried out any Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) of fast track power project in different parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, project-wise,

(c) the reaction of the Government to the findings/ observations of NEERI; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken to ensure that the environmental guidelines are followed while executing the projects?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) No, Sir. The National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) has not carried out any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of fast track power projects in different parts of the country.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The stipulations laid down in the environmental clearance letter are regularly monitored by the Regional Offices of the Ministry, the Central Pollution Control Board and the respective State Pollution Control Boards for their implementation.

Chief Minister's Conference

952. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Chief Ministers' Conference was held in New Delhi on 24 May, 1997 to discuss on providing effective and responsible administration;

(b) if so, the opinion expressed by different Chief Ministers;

(c) whether any resolution was adopted to revitalise the administration and to reform the public services;

(d) if so, the salient features thereof; and

(e) the action plan formulated, if any, to adopt and implement those resolutions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (e) A Conference of the Chief Ministers of States/UTs was held on 24 May, 1997 under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister to discuss an Action Plan for Effective and Responsive Government. The Action Plan dealt with three themes, namely, Accountable and Citizen-friendly Government, Transparency and Right to Information, and Improving the Performance and Integrity of the Public Services. The issues that were discussed under these themes and which are being followed up at Central and State levels are:

(i) Citizens Charter and accountable administration;

(ii) Effective and speedy public grievance redressal system;

(iii) Empowering elected local bodies and decentralised delivery of services;

(iv) Review of laws, regulations and procedures;

(v) Transparency and Right to Information;

(vi) Access of the public to information from public offices and facilitation counters;

(vii) Code of Ethics for public services;

(viii) Tackling corruption and cleansing the administration;

(ix) Stability of tenure and a scheme for Civil Services Boards.

The Chief Ministers and Central Ministers attending the Conference strongly endorsed the need for ensuring responsive, accountable, transparent and people-friendly administration at all levels. In the Resolution adopted at the Conference, the States welcomed the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister towards more effective and responsive administration and stated that these initiatives were important and timely. It was agreed that each State would work for the implementation of the Action Plan, making appropriate allowance for variation in local circumstances.

The Government has set up a Committee under the Cabinet Secretary including some Chief Secretaries representing different regions of the country as well as some senior officials of the Government of India in order to elaborate different elements of the Action Plan and work out various decisions required at Central and State levels.

[Translation]

Release of Washeries in Damodar River

953. SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether residuals from the washeries of Coal India Limited and its auxiliary companies like Dugdha, Kargali, Swang and Kathara washeries are being released into Damodar river passing through the Coal belt of Bihar;

(b) whether residuals and waste of Bokaro thermal power station and C.T.P.S. are also being released into the Damodar river; and

(c) if so, the steps taken by the Government to check this practice?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) Under normal circumstances, no discharge from coal washeries located in the Damodar basin goes into the river Damodar as all coal washeries including those of the Coal India Limited and its auxiliary companies like Dugdha, Kargali, Swang and Kathara have installed waste water recycling systems. However, during monsoon months, some coal fines and other rejects from these washeries are swept away along with surface run-off into the river. Ash slurry from the Bokaro Thermal Power Station is being released into the river Damodar without proper treatment. This matter is being heard and monitored by the Supreme Court under the public interest litigation of M.C. Mehta, V/s. Union of India & others. The Central Pollution Control Board has issued directions to the Chandrapura Thermal Power Station (CTPS) on 14.05.1997 for taking immediate steps to ensure that effluents from the power station are discharged into the river after proper treatment only.

[English]

Setting up of Petro-Chemical Complexes

954. SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have cleared certain projects for setting up Petro-Chemical complexes in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, Statewise (particularly in Punjab); and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details are contained in the enclosed *Statement.*

(c) Information is being collected.